

NEW LAND.¹

ON June 24, 1898, a vessel, insignificant in size and somewhat quaint in appearance, unlike ships generally engaged in ordinary mercantile avocations, might have been seen threading her way, under her own steam, through the numerous merchant ships that were at anchor in the harbour of Christiania. She was a vessel of no common type; her peculiarities of construction and rig were noticeable, even to the inexperienced eye of a landsman, and judging from the enthusiastic cheers with which she was greeted on all sides, she was evidently bound on a voyage of no common interest. The ships in harbour were all decorated with gay bunting; flags flew from their mastheads, and cheer after cheer resounded from their crowded decks and rigging as she steamed slowly past. The quays and wharves along the shore were also thronged with a vast concourse of people, bedecked in

designed and constructed for Dr. Nansen in 1892, and had carried that bold explorer northwards on his memorable and adventurous voyage towards the North Pole. His second in command, and navigating officer, on that occasion was Otto Sverdrup, an officer of the Norwegian mercantile marine, who had been specially selected for the appointment in consequence of the experience he had gained in ice navigation while serving as a mate on board a Greenland whaler.

It was the same Otto Sverdrup who was in command of the little *Fram* as she steamed out of Christiania Harbour on the occasion to which we refer, but in this instance he was not only commander of the ship, but was also the leader of the expedition. He had already won his laurels as an Arctic explorer, and had proved himself a careful, as well as a skilful, navigator in ice-encumbered seas. His selection for the command of the *Fram* was more than justified, as a perusal

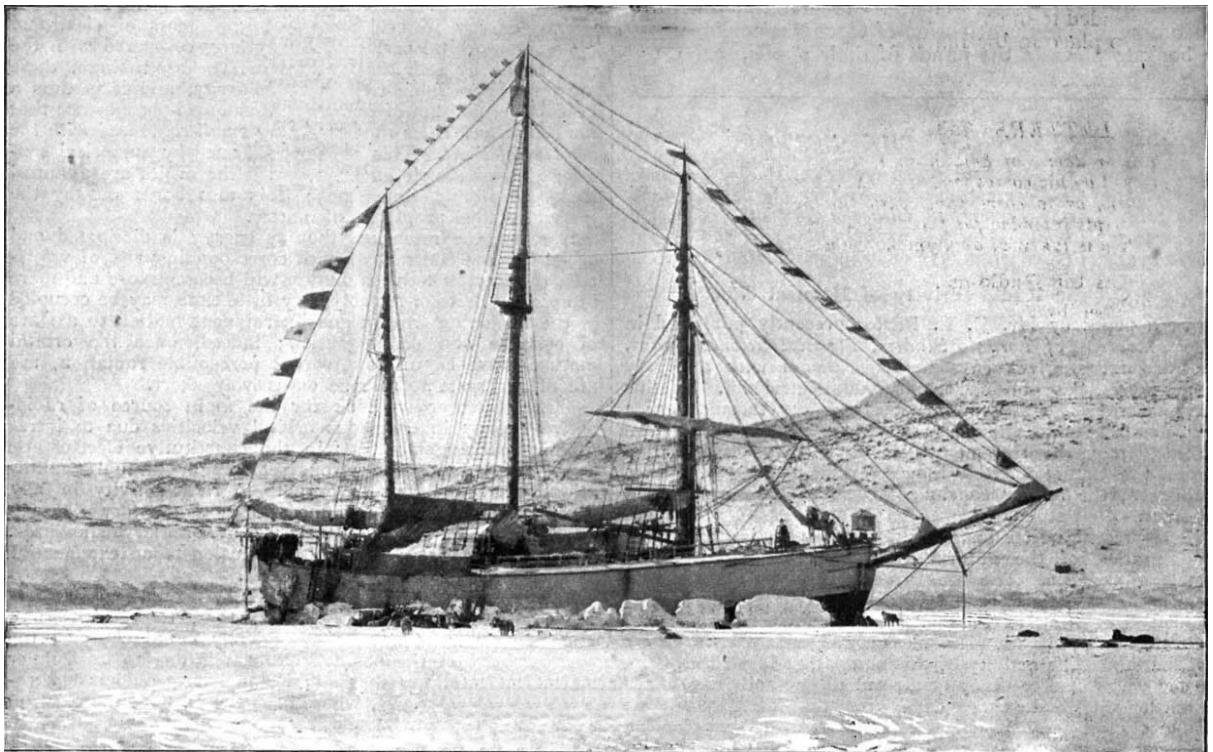


FIG. 1.—Seventeenth of May, 1899. From "New Land," by Otto Sverdrup.

their smartest and gayest holiday attire, all equally enthusiastic in their demonstrations of farewell, while the fjord itself was alive with innumerable boats of all descriptions, including many small steamers, all intent upon one object, namely, to do honour to the little vessel that was so quietly proceeding to sea, and to wave her a last good-bye.

What was the cause of all this enthusiasm and excitement? and why was this little craft the centre of so much attention and attraction?

A glance at the name on her stern revealed the fact that she was the *Fram*, and that she was bound on an important voyage of geographical exploration and scientific research in high northern latitudes.

She was the same little *Fram* that was specially

of his account of the voyage, which has recently been published under the title of "New Land," will abundantly testify. The book, originally produced in Norway, has been well and ably translated into English by Ethel Hearn. The narrative of the cruise is presented to us in the shape of two handsomely bound volumes, profusely illustrated from sketches and photographs taken by members of the expedition. It is perhaps unfortunate that a great many of the illustrations in the text are not inserted on the pages to which they refer, but this does not detract from their excellence. The story as related is the plain unvarnished tale of a sailor; the incidents are graphically described, and a vein of humour pervades the whole narrative.

The Introduction informs the reader very curtly as to the origin of the expedition, and how it was that Otto Sverdrup was selected as leader. He writes :—

¹ "New Land. Four Years in the Arctic Regions." By Otto Sverdrup. Translated from the Norwegian by Ethel Harriet Hearn. 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1904.) Price 36s. net.

"A few days after our return from the first Norwegian Polar Expedition, we were lying in Lysaker Bay unloading the *Fram* when Dr. Nansen came on board. 'Do you still wish to go on another expedition to the North?' he asked me. 'Yes, certainly,' I answered, 'if only I had the chance.' He then told me that Consul Axel Heiberg,¹ and the firm of brewers Messrs. Ringnes Brothers,¹ were willing to equip a new scientific expedition with myself as leader."

The Norwegian Government, realising the value of the work it was proposed to carry out, in a truly patriotic spirit well worthy of emulation, placed the *Fram* at the disposal of the promoters of the enterprise, and generously added the sum of 1100*l.* to assist in defraying the cost of the expedition. The main object was the exploration of the north coast of Greenland by way of Smith Sound and Robeson Channel, in fact, to follow in the footsteps of Nares's expedition

days in the Atlantic, when somewhat stormy weather was encountered, is thus jocosely alluded to by the author:—

"The members of the expedition, who were not much used to the sea, turned very white, and looked extremely serious. They trooped to the doctor and complained of various symptoms; some had headache, some shivering fits, and some pains in the stomach, which they had contracted, they knew not how; but none of them mentioned the malady by its right name. The doctor, however, came to the conclusion that the complaint with the many different aspects, had a single and fairly simple name, to wit, sea sickness; and for it there was but one and an equally simple remedy, dry land. Unhappily we had forgotten to bring any with us in our otherwise so well equipped Expedition, but it was hoped it might be found somewhere north in the Arctic Ocean, and this appeared to console the sufferers."



FIG. 2.—Sledging expedition ready to start. Spring, 1901. From "New Land," by Otto Sverdrup.

in 1875; on reaching the highest point attained by our countrymen on the north coast of Greenland, the explorers were to continue along the coast, and as far to the east as it was possible to reach—in other words, to determine by actual exploration the insularity of Greenland.

There was to be no question of trying to reach the North Pole!

In the event of unforeseen difficulties interfering with the successful accomplishment of this project, Captain Sverdrup was at liberty to use his own judgment and discretion in formulating a revised programme that would, in his opinion, be the best to further the interests of geographical exploration and other scientific investigations.

The liveliness of the little *Fram* during the first few

¹ These gentlemen had contributed largely in assisting to defray the expenses of Nansen's expedition!

Time, however, as is usual in similar cases, soon restored the ailing ones to their customary health and the free use of their sea-legs! The complement of the little ship was, exclusive of the captain, only fifteen souls. In this small number was included two deck officers, a doctor, cartographer (who, by the way, was a cavalry officer), botanist, geologist, zoologist, two engineers, a steward, and four others who made themselves generally useful in carrying out any duties that might at any time be apportioned to them. All, it is almost unnecessary to add, assisted in the working of the ship when at sea or in the ice.

On reaching Smith Sound, their further progress north was effectively barred by an impenetrable ice pack. After several unsuccessful attempts to push through, they were at length compelled to go into winter quarters, on the west side of Smith Sound, not very far from its entrance, in a small partially

sheltered bay, which they appropriately named Fram's Haven.

The winter passed pleasantly. They were fortunate in securing abundance of fresh meat in the shape of musk oxen, hares and ptarmigan, while they were also lucky enough to kill several walruses, which afforded them an excellent opportunity of laying in a large stock of food for their dogs, of which they had about seventy on board.

It is a pity that Captain Sverdrup in his narrative should have considered it desirable to alter the nomenclature of that animal which has so long, and so universally, been known as the musk ox. Its scientific name is the *Ovibos moschatus*, and it was so called in consequence of the musky odour which has always been associated with its flesh. Captain Sverdrup, simply because he failed to detect this strong scent in any of the beasts killed in his expedition, somewhat arbitrarily alters the name by which they have hitherto been known to that of "polar ox." This is a misnomer, for although the animals have been found in a fairly high northern latitude, they are also inhabitants of sub-Arctic climes, and are frequently seen as far south as latitude 54° in North America.

It is an established fact, although not, apparently, coming under the personal cognisance of Captain Sverdrup, that unmistakable traces of the odour of musk, which have had most unpleasant effects on those who have partaken of the meat so tainted, have on many occasions been observed by travellers and explorers, who, however, also report that their flesh when not tainted is excellent eating.

It is therefore to be regretted that Captain Sverdrup should have so completely ignored the experience of others, and substituted another name for an animal that is so well known, and one which has been in general use for so many years.

During the winter and following spring, several sledging expeditions were undertaken, having for their object the exploration of Ellesmere Land.

On one of these excursions Captain Sverdrup was unlucky enough to break one of his teeth, which incident is thus somewhat facetiously alluded to.

"When dinner was at last served, I fell to on a biscuit with such ardour that I managed to break off a front tooth. Fosheim (his companion) thought we ought not to waste our teeth so far away from people, and implored me not to go on in that way. I followed his advice, and was about to throw away the tooth, when he again observed, that there was no knowing how useful it might be; so I put it in my pocket to serve as a remembrance and a warning. I have since had it put in again."

Fosheim was evidently a man of a practical turn of mind, thoughtful, sensible, and of great perspicacity!

Although the Eskimos have never yet been found living on the western side of Smith Sound, vestiges of a previous occupation of the country by these nomadic tribes were discovered. They consisted chiefly of little heaps of stones and the ribs of whales placed in circular formations, presumably so arranged as to form their summer encampments. Similar traces, it may be remembered, were found by Sir George Nares's expedition on the west side of Smith Sound.

During one of his sledging expeditions in the late autumn, Sverdrup was startled by the altogether unexpected arrival at his camp of a sledge with two men on it. They proved to be the American explorer, Commander Peary, with an Eskimo dog driver. They had driven over from the ship *Windward*, which was beset in the ice about a mile from the shore in the neighbourhood of Cape Hawks.

This meeting on the silent shores of the Arctic Ocean

seems to have been as surprising and as unexpected as the equally strange one between Nansen and Jackson in Franz Josef Land only a couple of years earlier. At that time they were probably the only two expeditions in the Arctic regions engaged on geographical discovery. They had been absent from home for a long period; they were several miles from their respective ships, yet we read, with something akin to surprise, that Peary only remained in their company for a few minutes, and would not even wait while a cup of coffee was being prepared for him, or, as Captain Sverdrup tersely puts it, "his visit was so short that we had hardly time to pull off our mittens!"

In the spring of 1899 the *Fram* was visited by several Eskimos from the east side of the Sound who were on their way to Peary's ship. They were so pleased with the warm reception that was accorded them, and with the kindness they received at the hands of the Norwegians, that they appear to have overstayed their welcome, for we read that:—

"We began to be heartily sick of them all. They spread all over the vessel a peculiar rank odour of blubber and train oil with indefinable additions. We tumbled over them wherever we went, while their shock heads of hair looked as if they might accommodate a legion of animals of which we stood in far greater fear than of either the polar ox or the bear!"

The wandering Eskimo is not altogether the most agreeable or the most savoury companion to associate with for an indefinite period.

It was not until the end of July that the *Fram* succeeded in extricating herself from the icy bondage in which she had been held for eleven long months. Attempts were at once made to work to the northward, but the ice was found so tightly packed that Captain Sverdrup abandoned all further efforts to proceed in that direction, and turned his attention to Jones Sound, a route that had always been regarded by Arctic authorities as one very favourable for exploration. On September 1 the *Fram*, having reached a position (in this sound) in the neighbourhood of Admiral Inglefield's furthest in 1852, was secured in her second winter quarters, in a small and almost land-locked harbour which was named Havnefjord.

From this position much useful and important geographical work was accomplished by boat in the autumn, and by sledges during the following winter and spring. Many musk oxen were fallen in with, and a large number of seals also were shot. The cold during the winter was so great that the brandy in a flask was frozen solid. The following little episode will show that inconveniences arising from intense cold were not regarded in a very serious manner by the travellers:—

"While Fosheim was taking his turn at running, being as warm as possible, he forgot all about his nose, which took this opportunity of freezing. He knew nothing about it, until it was frozen so stiff that it looked like a piece of white bone in the middle of his face, and he might easily have broken it off. Had it gone on freezing a little longer, he would have been noseless."

"However with general assistance and careful treatment that member was saved at the last moment, but it wore mourning for a long time afterwards, and looked more like a dab of pitch which had got into the wrong place than anything else in the world."

When released in the summer of 1900, the *Fram* steamed to the west and went up Cardigan Strait; after being beset in the ice for some weeks they succeeded in reaching the head of Goose Fjord, where they passed their third winter. They confidently expected that this would be their last winter from home; but, alas! the Fates ordained otherwise, and they were compelled to pass a fourth one, having only succeeded in

advancing during the summer a distance of nine miles, which brought them within five miles of the open water and freedom! It was, indeed, tantalising to know that such a short but impenetrable barrier intervened between them and the open sea. It will be remembered that it was exactly this distance of land ice that prevented our own ship, the *Discovery*, from being liberated after her first winter in the Antarctic regions.

In spite of their disappointment, the brave Norwegians did not in any way relax their efforts to carry out the important work entrusted to them, and much valuable information in various branches of science was obtained during their long sojourn in Goose Fjord, one of the sledging expeditions having attained the high latitude of $80^{\circ} 30'$, almost succeeding in reaching and joining hands with Aldrich's furthest in lat. $82^{\circ} 16'$ and long. $85^{\circ} 30' W.$ on the north coast of Grinnell Land.

It was August, 1902, before the little *Fram* was released from her imprisonment, reaching Norway the following month, where the gallant explorers received after their long absence that hearty welcome, not only from their own countrymen, but from the civilised world at large, which they so richly deserved.

On the whole the expedition achieved a great success. It added very materially to our geographical knowledge of the Arctic regions, especially in the neighbourhood of the Parry Archipelago. Captain Sverdrup cleared up satisfactorily the debatable question as to whether Hayes Sound had an outlet to the west, or whether it was, as many thought, only a large bay. The western limits of Ellesmere Land, Grinnell Land, and Grant Land were determined, a matter of some geographical importance, as illustrating the archipelagic character of the land on the western side of Smith Sound and Robeson Channel.

The scientific work accomplished by the expedition is contained in four appendices at the end of the second volume. Appendix i. relates to the geological investigations made during the voyage, and is of great interest. Appendix ii. is a summary of the botanical work of the expedition and its results. Appendix iii. refers to the fauna of the different localities visited by the explorers. The scarcity, it might almost be said the extinction, of the reindeer is ascribed to wolves; these voracious animals are the great enemies of all Arctic quadrupeds, except, perhaps, the polar bear and the musk ox. Four species of butterflies were found, as well as some moths and a few wasps.

Appendix iv. refers to the meteorological observations regularly taken during the whole four years.

Much literary skill is exhibited by the author in the compilation of this work. It is written in a popular manner, and imparts valuable information in an interesting and pleasing way.

It is a book that will certainly take its place among other standard works on the Arctic regions.

An excellent map of the regions explored will be found in a pocket at the end of the second volume.

AN IMPORTANT ARCHÆOLOGICAL DISCOVERY IN EGYPT.

THE most important archæological event reported from Egypt during the last excavation season (1903-4) is the discovery by Prof. Naville, of the University of Geneva, and Mr. H. R. Hall, of the British Museum, of the most ancient temple at Thebes. The excavations were carried on by Messrs. Naville and Hall on behalf of the Egypt Exploration Fund, which is to be congratulated on having made this important discovery. The services which have been rendered by the Egypt Exploration Fund to Egyptological science since

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its foundation, some twenty years ago, have indeed been innumerable.

One of the most important works carried out by the fund was Prof. Naville's complete excavation of the great temple of Deir el-Bahari, in the western hills of Thebes. The excavation came to an end in 1899, after the main temple had been entirely cleared and the necessary works of conservation and restoration had been carried out, but before the environs of the temple had been completely explored. To the south of the temple lay a wilderness of rubbish heaps, which might conceal a necropolis or even another temple, placed between the great shrine built by Queen Hatshepsut and the southern horn of the *cirque* of cliffs which rise behind and around Deir el-Bahari. Means for further excavation failed, however, and the exploration of the unexcavated tract to the south of the temple was postponed until the present season, when Prof. Naville again took up the spade and very soon discovered that underneath the heaps of rubbish (Fig. 1) lay the not inconsiderable remains of a smaller temple, of high archæological importance on account of its age.

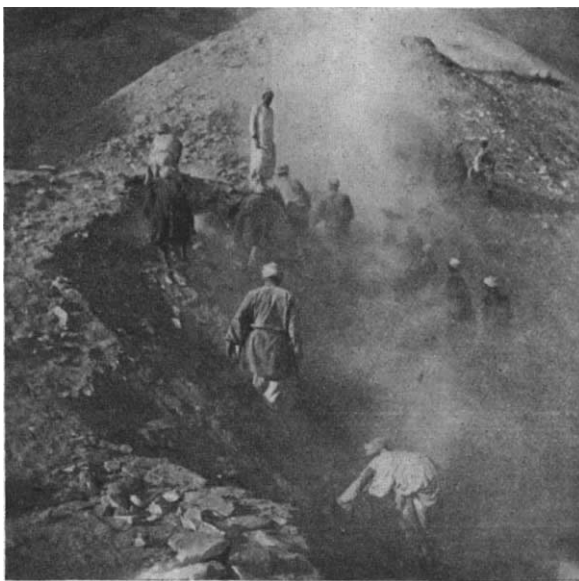


FIG. 1.—Excavators at work on the Mounds.

It is the funerary temple or mortuary chapel of the most distinguished monarch of the eleventh dynasty, Nebkherurā Mentuhetep, who reigned about 2,500 B.C., according to the best authorities. A temple of this date is a great rarity in Egypt. Remains of even older ones (of the same funerary character) have been found by the German excavators, Messrs. Borchardt and Schäfer, at Abusir, near Cairo; these belong to the fifth dynasty and are at least five hundred years older than Prof. Naville's new temple; they are the most ancient temple remains in Egypt. The new temple, however, comes next to them in age, and if it is surpassed by them in peculiarities of architecture, it appears to fully equal them in general architectural interest and to surpass them in the point of artistic interest and importance, since it has added considerably to our knowledge of the history of Egyptian art.

The artistic triumphs of the Old Empire are well known; but our knowledge of the condition of art at the beginning of the Middle Empire under the eleventh dynasty was, until the present discovery, scanty. The general impression has been that the work of the